

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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Mayor Healy & City Council to Celebrate the 61st Anniversary of India's Independence Indian Flag Raising and Indo-American Parade and Festival

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, the Municipal Council and the Division of Cultural Affairs will proudly celebrate the **61st Anniversary of India's Independence** during the **Indian Flag Raising** and the **Indo-American Parade and Festival**.

This two day event begins with a flag raising at **3 p.m.** on **Friday, August 15, 2008** at **City Hall**, 280 Grove Street. The **Indo-American Parade and Festival** will kick off at **12 p.m. on Saturday, August 16, 2008** at Kennedy Boulevard and Newark Avenue and will proceed to Leonard Gordon Park at Kennedy Boulevard and Manhattan Avenue. **The festival, part of the city's "Tapestry of Nations" Ethnic Festival Series, will run from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and will consist of traditional Indian music and dance.**

"Jersey City is without a doubt the most ethnically diverse community in the State," said **Mayor Healy**. "What better way to showcase this diversity of cultures than offer programs and activities focusing on the traditions and heritages brought here from the native lands of our newer residents."

India's Independence Day is celebrated on August 15 to commemorate its independence from the British rule and its birth as a sovereign nation on that day in 1947. It involved a wide spectrum of Indian political organizations, philosophies, and rebellions between 1857 and India's emergence as a unified nation-state which exemplifies the principles of fairness, dignity, peace and democracy.

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This anniversary observance reaffirms the dedication of the Indian people all around the world to the highest ideals of democracy and freedom. It is a celebration that recognizes the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi whose philosophy of non-violence was used in very creative ways, including Gandhi's famous march to the sea to make salt. This march was a precursor to the civil rights marches in the United States. India's independence was achieved and pledged to the principles of fairness, dignity, peace and democracy.

On **August 15, 2008**, the flags of the United States and India will be displayed high above City Hall in recognition of the cherished cultural and ethnic diversity of our community. It is also a reflection of our City's strong relationship with the local Indian community. The flag of India is raised to honor the people of India for their struggle for Independence.

The India-American community always sought to honor worthwhile and deserving individuals for their hard work and tireless efforts. This year, the India-American community recognizes and honors, **Swami Radeshwaranand** who possess great virtues like compassion for mankind, humility, and patience. Despite all of his successes and career achievements, he decided to give himself full time to the mission of Guru Ashutosh Ji Maharaj and dedicated all of his time, energy, skills, and efforts to help the Guru establish peace in the world through divine knowledge and meditation.

Mayor Healy and Honoree Pam Kwatra will march as this year's Grand Marshalls in the parade on Saturday, **August 16th**. Sponsored by the **Indo-American Senior Citizens' Association of Hudson County**, the committee is honoring **Pam Kwatra**, who is the only woman amongst seven Indian Honorees of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor 2008, which recognizes outstanding citizens of diverse origins in recognition of their humanitarian work and for building the bridge between the two communities, the communities of their homeland and the community of the United States of America. She has personally supported many Indian women in the USA who were victims of domestic violence for years and provided them assistance and counseling during their critical rehabilitation period. Ms. Kwatra is also a respected community leader and Founder/President of Kripari Marketing.

Among the other honored guests are: Piyush Patel, Chairman of FINSANA; Shuresh Jani, International Guj. Association & AAINA; Anil Bansal, Chairman of Indus Bank; and H.R. Shah, Chairman of TV Asia.

For more information about the Indo-American Festival, please contact Cultural Affairs at (201) 547-6921.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///